



The ENVIRONMENTAL BULLETIN

from the Savannah River Site

November 21, 1997 • Volume 8 • Number 24

Interim Management of Nuclear Materials: Supplemental ROD signed

Assistant Secretary of Energy Alvin Alm signed the fourth Supplemental Record of Decision (ROD) for the *Interim Management of Nuclear Materials Environmental Impact Statement* (IMNM EIS) on October 31, 1997. This ROD selects processing and storage for 120 containers of plutonium 238, which are unsuitable for programmatic purposes without isotopic enrichment. Once processed in H Area, this

material will be stored in the H Area high level waste tanks until vitrified in the Defense Waste Processing Facility.

Also included in this ROD, DOE announced its decision to stabilize the H Canyon plutonium and neptunium solutions and obsolete neptunium targets to oxides using the H Canyon and HB-Line facilities. This is consistent with the Energy Secretary's approval of the Phased Canyon Strategy for

F and H canyons. HB-Line Phase II will be started up to implement this decision. Previously, DOE had decided to stabilize the H Canyon plutonium solutions to metal using F Canyon and FB-Line and to stabilize the neptunium-237 solution and obsolete neptunium targets to glass using the F Canyon vitrification capability.

Rocky Flats Plutonium Residues and Scrub Alloy: Draft EIS available

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the *Management of Certain Plutonium Residues and Scrub Alloy Stored at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site* has been released for a 45-day public comment period. This draft EIS evaluates alternatives to (1) process certain Rocky Flats plutonium residues and scrub alloy, (2) to stabilize these materials to resolve health and safety concerns raised by the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, and (3) to prepare these materials for final disposition. A public meeting to discuss this draft EIS will be held on Tuesday, December 16, 6 p.m., Ramada Plaza Hotel, 640 Broad Street, Augusta, Georgia.

The plutonium residues consist of several different types or categories of materials.

Each different material may be processed by several different technologies. These technologies would be used on site at Rocky Flats (using immobilization and plutonium separation technologies) and, for some of the materials, off site at SRS and Los Alamos National Laboratory (using plutonium separation technologies). The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory was initially considered as a potential processing site in the Notice of Intent, issued in late 1996, but has since been removed.

This draft EIS focuses on technologies that would be available in the 1998-2004 timeframe to process certain plutonium and scrub alloy so that they meet the safeguard limits required for disposal of transuranic waste. The immobilized residues and pro-

cess wastes would be shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for disposal as transuranic waste when that facility is open. The Department of Energy currently anticipates WIPP will open for operations in 1998. Plutonium that is separated from the residues would be dispositioned in accordance with decisions to be reached under DOE's Surplus Plutonium Disposition EIS; this draft EIS is scheduled for release in early 1998.

The public comment period will last through January 5, 1998. Copies of the summary and full draft are available through DOE's Center for Environmental Management, 470 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW, Suite 7112, Washington, D.C. or by calling 1 (800) 736-3282.

Spent nuclear fuel disposition technology public meeting planned

The National Research Council, the operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences, will hold an open meeting December 2-3, 8:30 a.m., at the Radisson Riverfront Hotel, Augusta, to seek information and review alternate technologies for disposition of aluminum-based spent nuclear fuel.

The study was requested by the Department of Energy Savannah River Operations Office to: examine the current technologies chosen by DOE and identify other alternatives DOE might consider; examine waste-package performance criteria developed by DOE to meet the waste acceptance criteria for disposal of aluminum-based spent fuel

and other factors that DOE might consider; and assess of the cost and timing for the implementation of each spent nuclear fuel disposition technology, depending on the schedule for the project. The study conclusion is expected by March 1998.

Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board to visit SRS

The public is invited to attend an open meeting of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (NWTRB) on December 17, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Radisson Riverfront Hotel, Augusta, Georgia.

This meeting was scheduled at the request of the NWTRB in its role as a group appointed by President Bill Clinton to oversee the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management of the Department of Energy.

SRS will provide presentations on the SRS High-Level Waste Program, Spent Nuclear Fuel Program, and the Alternative Technology Program.